

Dear Members of the Human Services Committee of Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Marlene Edelstein, and I am a nurse practitioner working in primary care at a federally qualified health center in Meriden and around Connecticut. I stand in support of SB284. Expanding access to HUSKY up to age 18 regardless of immigration status is an important step in making sure our immigrant community has access to the healthcare we all need and deserve. But our work doesn't end with expanding access up to age 18; we need to open access to HUSKY and healthcare to all immigrants of any age, including parents and adults, my patients.

I am a primary care provider and an HIV specialist. I also work at clinics located at homeless shelters and see patients through the Connecticut River Valley Farmworkers Program. Many of my patients are immigrants who are not insured. By the time they reach my office, they are often dealing with medical, mental, and developmental challenges that should have been addressed years before. Families have been stressed trying to figure out how to get their child medical care. An issue that had a straightforward treatment turns into a complex case. If these patients had insurance, they would be able to come in earlier, and families wouldn't have to make the painful decision to put off care because of its cost.

One of the worst parts of my job is when I feel it is necessary to send an uninsured patient to a specialist, order imaging, or prescribe a medication that they are unable to access due to cost. My team and I do our best to find the most affordable option but often, a patient and their family will be unable to get the follow up they need and deserve because they do not have access to Husky.

I support S.B. 284 and I ask the committee to support and pass this legislation. Looking forward, I ask the committee to work towards opening access to all community members in CT regardless of age or status.

Thank you for your time,
Marlene Edelstein